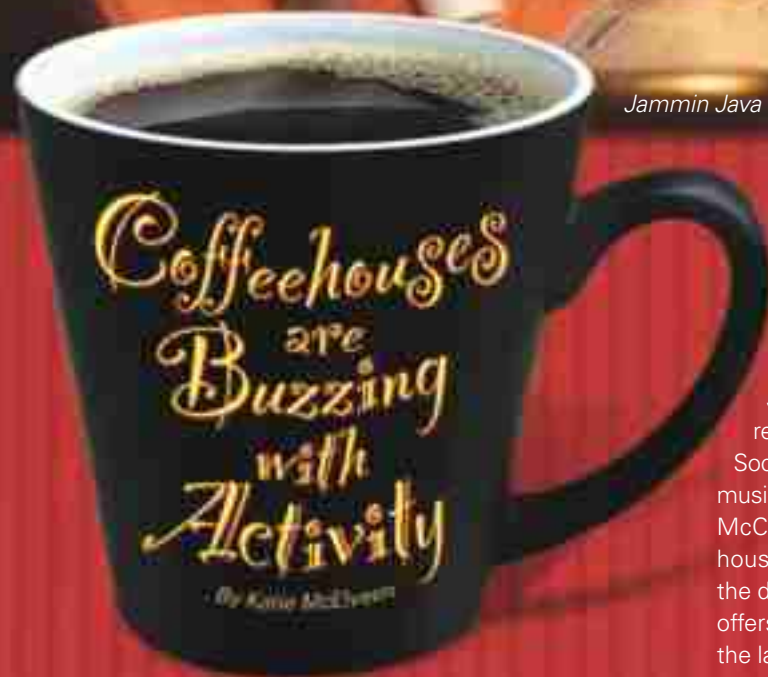


*Jammin Java in Columbia*



Coffee Underground isn't the state's only coffeehouse that takes its brew seriously. Down the road in Columbia, Jammin Java (803-254-5282), a cozy space set under busy Main Street, serves a proprietary blend of beans from Ethiopia and Sumatra to customers looking for coffee that's truly good to the last drop. But Jammin Java doesn't just buzz with caffeine. Poetry readings and philosophy discussions on the aptly named Socrates Café night get the intellectual crowd going, and musical performances from well-known artists such as Edwin McCain, Danielle Howle and Butch Walker rock the coffee-house's ancient brick walls several evenings a week. During the day, the quiet clickety clack of keyboards—Jammin Java offers wireless internet to paying customers—accompanies the lattes and creative sandwiches that owner Nathan Good named after US landmarks.

Bitten by the coffee bug while on vacation in Seattle, Dana Lowie and Steve Taylor returned to Greenville, SC, determined to bring the Seattle coffee experience—rich, deep brews served in a friendly setting that encouraged lingering—to their hometown.

Serendipity intervened when a subterranean space on the corner of Main and—no kidding—Coffee Streets in downtown Greenville became available. Coffee Underground (864-298-0494) was born. Part gallery for emerging artists, part improv theater and part café/wine bar, Coffee Underground's quirky charm has made it one of downtown Greenville's most popular gathering spots, attracting lawyers along with poets, writers and students. It's easy to see, and smell, why. "We still roast our own coffee from over 20 different places around the world and make our own desserts," says Dana Lowie. "We take coffee seriously!"



*Coffee Underground*



*Kudu Coffee*



*Coffee Underground*



*Kudu Coffee*

Then there's Immaculate Consumption (803-799-9053). Located just a bean's throw from South Carolina's capitol, this Columbia institution was offering big, bold brews, estate-produced coffees and single-source teas long before it was cool. Just about as famous are the shop's soups—they're made fresh every day—and chewy, addictive, hubcap-sized cookies in old-fashioned flavors like peanut butter and oatmeal raisin that are perfect for sharing.

The work of more than 40 artists graces the walls at Collectors Café (843-449-9370), a loungy coffeehouse in North Myrtle Beach that's set with velvet sofas in rainbow hues and tile-covered tables. Although the restaurant doesn't open until noon, it stays open late, offering jazz, dessert and cordials to go with coffee.

The leafy courtyard at Kudu Coffee (843-853-7186) in Charleston is just one reason to visit this African-themed coffeehouse; another is owner John Saunders, who recently moved to Charleston from Africa and has decorated the gallery-like space with skins, trophies and native artwork that he's collected during his lifetime. But what seems to have customers flocking to the shop is the coffee. Reflecting his love of the rich, earthy brews of his native continent, Kudu serves only African coffees. "People love them," he notes.

Opening a coffeehouse seemed like a natural thing for Saunders to do after his recent move. "I grew up near the coffee and tea plantations in Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania and wrote most of my dissertation at a coffee shop," he smiles. "This is what I always envisioned." Ironically, the shop, which is tucked into a tiny alley off King Street, is located in the very building where John's mother, a Charleston native, worked as a student nurse many years ago. "She couldn't believe it when she saw it," he says. "It's no wonder we feel so comfortable here."

But all the java-fueled action isn't limited to South Carolina's big cities. In the Upstate, owner Josann Thomas's homemade apple pie is just the thing to go with a latte at the Pendleton Café and Coffee (864-646-7838). Located on the town's shady square, the café is the site of impromptu lunchtime concerts on the upright piano that stands in the corner. And if Clemson

fans feel particularly comfortable here, it's for good reason: the café's handrails and other woodwork were constructed out of the cypress bleachers from Clemson's original stadium. In horse-loving Camden, another small town, Cups Coffee (803-425-9900) sits along the back wall of a bookstore at TenEleven Galleria, a 19th-century, two-story loft that's also home to antique stores and other shops.

Half caf, no caf, with poetry or just by itself, no matter how you take your coffee, you can find it in South Carolina.

